



# Reserve Officers Association of the United States

*"PRESERVING THE NATION'S DEFENSE FOR 80 YEARS"*

March 19, 2003

The Honorable Tom Lantos  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Lantos,

On behalf of the nearly 80,000 members of the Reserve Officers Association of the United States, congressionally chartered to "support the development and execution of a military policy for the United States that will provide adequate national security," I want to thank you for your efforts in introducing the Omnibus Equity for Reservists Pay Act of 2003. The bill is an important step forward in recognizing the contributions of the members of the Reserve components of our Armed Forces to the Total Force and our national defense.

Today as we wait anxiously for news of whether or when we will go to war with Iraq, more than 200,000 members of the Reserve components of our Armed Forces have been mobilized and/or deployed in anticipation of that event. Since September 11, 2001, a quarter-million citizen-soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen have been called to active duty and have left their homes, families, and communities in response to emerging contingencies. By the Department of Defense's own estimate, about one third of these activated reservists are losing money when their civilian paycheck is compared to their military salary (including the tax advantages of various benefits and allowances). Nearly seventy thousand troops is a hefty slice of Total Force assets going broke on active duty, going bankrupt before they even see the enemy they came to fight. The situation is bad and it can only get worse when you consider that Iraq will very likely take several years to be rebuilt, that the Reserve components will probably be supervising the project, and that if recent history is any guide, such occasions will continue.

The issue, here is that if we are serious about the societal benefits of the Total Force policy and the popular support it brings to any military undertaking, we need to reinforce it in every way possible. We cannot allow the compensation aspects of the system to drift so far off center that fully a third of its Reserve component members become economically dysfunctional merely by putting on their uniforms. Bankruptcy is not an effective recruiting or retention tool. With all of the other more immediate (and less tractable) issues mobilized reservists must face, we should do all we can to eliminate or ameliorate financial insecurity caused by post-mobilization compensation dysfunction.

Your bill provides a range of solutions to the problem that has long plagued reservists and by extension the Total Force, and ultimately the nation. We are pleased at your vision in introducing it and we stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jayson L. Spiegel".

Jayson L. Spiegel  
Executive Director

---

Army ? Navy ? Air Force ? Marine Corps ? Coast Guard ? Public Health Service ? NOAA

One Constitution Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20002-5655  
Telephone: (202) 479-2200 ? FAX: (202) 479-0416 ? 800-809-9448  
[www.roa.org](http://www.roa.org)